LETTER

TO

CARDINAL WISEMAN,

IN ANSWER TO HIS

"REMARKS ON LADY MORGAN'S STATEMENTS REGARDING ST. PETER'S CHAIR."

BY

SYDNEY LADY MORGAN.

"Malevolentiæ hominum in me si potens occurres; si non poteris hoc te consolabere quod me de statu meo nullis contumeliis deterrere possunt."—(*Brutus Ciceroni.*) *Ciceron. ad Familiares*, lib. xi., ep. 11.

"Render an account of the origin of your chair; since you claim to be the Holy Church, and even say that you have a portion in the City of Rome. But if you ask Macrobius where he sits in that city, will he be able to reply, in the chair of St. Peter? I doubt if he even knows it by sight; and to its Church he does not approach."—*St. Optatus Milevitanus*, lib. ii., *adv. Parmenion.*

THIRD EDITION,

WITH A POSTSCRIPT.

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CHARLES WESTERTON, 20, ST. GEORGE'S PLACE,

HYDE PARK CORNER.

1851.

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TO

"Nicholas, by the Divine Mercy, of the Holy Roman Church, by the title of St. Pudentiana, Cardinal Priest, Archbishop of Westminster, and Administrator Apostolic of the Diocese of Southwark."

My Lord Cardinal,

A letter addressed recently to the *Morning Chronicle*, headed "Lady Morgan and Cardinal Wiseman," has drawn my attention to an early publication of your Eminence, which, more important in its object than in its subject, is now doubtless destined, like all your Eminence ever has written, or may write, to see the light; coming forth, as you now do, the foreground figure of a great epoch. The title of your Eminence's work is "Remarks on Lady Morgan's Statements regarding St. Peter's Chair, preserved in the Vatican Basilic." It is in bulk a brochure, in spirit a Bull. The tendency of your Eminence's Remarks was to place my book called "Italy" on the

Index Expurgatorius of the Holy Office of Rome,—in this you succeeded; and to banish the Author of that work from the happy social position which she has always occupied,—in this you failed. For the awful *Vade in pace!* of the Church has now no longer the power to hurl its victims into the darkness of social oblivion; nor can even a Papal excommunication close the doors of European *salons*, against those whose moral consideration or intellectual attainments have brought them within the circles of distinguished society. My work on Italy was written and published under the wise and liberal pontificate of Pope Pius VII.; to whom I had the honour of presentation; and to whose eminently gifted and accomplished Secretary of State, Cardinal Gonsalvi, I was indebted for many kind attentions and serious obligations. Among others, that of rescuing my husband's books from a seizure made by the Holy Office; though the volumes had been purchased, at considerable expense, from Roman booksellers and celebrated antiquarians.

I know not what rank your Eminence then held in that Church, of which you are now so brilliant an illustration, on your way to "*the all-hail hereafter.*" You may have, *then*, been lisping in numbers to the "Latian echoes,"

"A youth to fortune and to fame unknown,"

merged perchance in those groups of stalwart *Chierici* (or 'prentice-priests) who then swarmed in Rome, fresh from the banks of the Shannon or the Boyne,

and who were wont, and "*ever of an afternoon,*" to walk the cloisters, as medical students walk the hospitals, waiting for—a call! or as Puseyite curates,

"In *maiden* meditation, fancy free,"

pace the aristocratic pavements of Belgravia, waiting for—a convert!

I am also ignorant, my Lord Cardinal, at what epoch you first *published* your "Remarks on Lady Morgan's Statements," &c. I take it for granted, it was not under the tolerant reign of Pope Pius VII. But, as an edition of your "Remarks," now lying before me, (the first copy I have ever seen,) is dated 1833, I suppose it must have been brought out in the stern pontificate of Leo XII., who was thus characterized by the Pasquin of the day, in allusion to his vigorous but ineffectual rescripts,—

"Non è Pio, non è Clemente,
Ma vecchio Leone senza dente."

Your Eminence's own account of the publication, given in a short preface, is, that—"it was first published in an English periodical, then translated into Italian for the Giornale Arcadico," (and never was an effusion less *arcadian.*) "Rome," you add, "is the place where its subject must naturally excite most interest; and it is to English readers, who have probably heard or read Lady Morgan's Statement, that a confutation of it should be principally addressed." It is a singular fact, that I never saw this able attack of your Eminence on my work until *lately;* and so the thunders of the Vatican rolled over me innoxious.

I heard, indeed, that a very learned diatribe had been written against my description of St. Peter's chair; but I carelessly dismissed the subject with the observation of a French wit,—

"Que les gens d'esprit sont bêtes."

But times have changed; and the Rector of an English or Irish Roman College in 1833 has become, in 1850, "Nicholas, by the Divine Mercy, of the Holy Roman Church, by the title of St. Pudentiana, Cardinal Priest, Archbishop of Westminster, and Administrator Apostolic of the Diocese of Southwark." It is possible, that among your Eminence's *Caudatorii* (or trainbearers) there may be some one literary and clerical genius fired with the ambition to edite *your* works, when I shall be no longer living to defend *mine*, and who may hand me down to posterity (my only chance) marked with the *cachet* of your Eminence's reprobation. Self-defence is the first law of nature, common to all created things

"That live and move, and have a being;"

and I am sure your Eminence will approve as a man, as a gentleman, and as a Christian, even of a woman availing herself of the great immunity, and bringing her poor reasoning instincts to bear upon an attack made against her by so potent and illustrious an opponent, who, having written under a false impression, will be happy to acknowledge his mistake, and, like the recording angel of other accusations, "drop a tear upon the page, and blot it out for ever!"

And now, my Lord, to the charge. You open your "Remarks" thus:—"Lady Morgan was originally known to the public as a writer of romance. So long as she persevered in that character, she had a right to *invent* amusing tales to gratify the curiosity of her readers: yet even the regions of fiction are subject to the great laws of justice and good faith; nor can that writer hope for indulgence, who, under the disguise of a fabulous narrative, conceals an attack upon the reputation and character of others."

My Lord, I agree to every point of your observation; but I beg to pause *here*. My Romances *were not*, as you assert, "*invented* merely to amuse and gratify the curiosity of my readers." They were written *for* and *in* the great cause of Catholic Emancipation—the theme and inspiration of my early authorship, and the conviction of my after-life. The titles of these books were Irish and Catholic. "The Wild Irish Girl," "O'Donnel," "Florence Macarthy," "The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys," &c.,—these were not names, as we say in Ireland, "to open a Church Pew with."

My heroes were Irish Patriots; my models of pastoral piety were Irish Priests. I was justified in the selection: for the celebrated Father Arthur O'Leary, the Sidney Smith of his Church and country, liberal, philosophical, and witty as the immortal Canon of St. Paul's himself!—the elegant and accomplished Dr. Everard, Bishop of Waterford; and many other of the Irish Catholic Hierarchy of former times,—gentlemen by birth, and *fine* gentlemen by all the

rights and advantages of a foreign and classical education,—then furnished me with reasons and motives for aiding, in *my* little way, the emancipation of my Catholic fellow-countrymen.

With respect to my Romances, they found their way into boudoirs and drawing-rooms, where better and sterner Propaganda might have been rejected; and I cannot but triumph in the consciousness that, like the nibbling of the mouse at the lion's net, I assisted to set the noble creature free,—for to personify Ireland in her happiest phase of the virtues peculiar to her, and the wit and genius which has ever been her own, she *is* a noble creature.

You proceed, my Lord :—" If so, what name can we give to the writer, who, soberly professing to instruct and inform, scruples not to fabricate or propagate an untrue story, which would suffice, if proved, to blight for ever the character of many *respectable and dignified individuals,*—to hold up to public abhorrence the hierarchy of a religion professed by millions of Christians, and record against that religion itself a *weighty* charge of hypocrisy and imposture ?—*and this has her Ladyship done,* in the passage to which I wish to call the attention of my readers. No longer professing to be a novel writer, she stood before the public as one who would enlighten and improve it, by new information upon a distant land, its inhabitants, its customs, and religion; and the public had a right to expect from her, veracity and accuracy in her statements; and the obligation, thus contracted by her, was doubled by the claims which those of

whom she wrote had to a just and true representation. Instead of this, she has too often drawn a most unfaithful portrait of their characters and opinions; and has treated their most holy sentiments with an indecent levity, and a cruel inattention, which, whether we consider her as a lady, a Christian, or a writer, cannot be reprobated in terms too severe for her deserts. The following is the passage which *I now desire principally to take into consideration* :—

" ' The sacrilegious curiosity of the French broke through all obstacles to their seeing the chair of St. Peter. They actually removed its superb casket, and discovered the relic. Upon its mouldering and dusty surface were traced carvings, which bore the appearance of letters. The chair was quickly brought into a better light, the dust and cobwebs removed, and the inscription (for an inscription it was) faithfully copied. The writing is in Arabic characters, and is the well-known confession of the Mahometan faith : *'There is but one God, and Mahomet is his prophet.'* It is supposed that this chair had been, among the spoils of the Crusaders, offered to the Church, at a time when a taste for antiquarian lore and the deciphering of inscriptions was not yet in fashion. This story has been since hushed up, the chair replaced; and none but the unhallowed remember the fact, and none but the audacious repeat it. Yet such there are even at Rome.' " *

" The most compendious course," continues your

* Lady Morgan's " Italy," vol. ii.

Eminence, "to confute this *unblushing calumny* would be, to quote the attestation of those who have been in the service of St. Peter's Church," [a more compendious course would be, perhaps, to remove the cover, and show the chair; the *calumny* might then have *blushed*, and the calumniator have stood convicted;] "since a period antecedent to the invasion of Rome by the French, to the fact that the seals were never violated, nor the relic inspected by them. But it *would be replied* to this, That the men who could deceive the public, in the impious manner which Lady Morgan supposes, would have little scruple in giving any testimony necessary to countenance that deceit." THIS *certainly would be the most natural conclusion.*

"But," your Eminence adds, "it is my wish to set this calumny at rest for ever" [and make an honest chair of this calumniated *cathedra*]; "and, at the same time, to give my Catholic readers information, which may not be uninteresting, upon this sacred relic of antiquity. I will first describe the chair of St. Peter: by this description, at once, it will be proved that it is not of Mahometan origin; and that all antiquarian arguments tend to confirm the pious tradition of the Church. I will next give the strong grounds whereon this tradition rests; and thereby demonstrate that this relic existed long before the Crusaders, or even Mahomet himself. In order to remove every shadow of doubt regarding the falsehood of her Ladyship's tale, I will lastly give a brief account of the circumstances which most probably led to its fabrication."

"A superb shrine of bronze, supported by four gigantic figures of the same materials, representing four Doctors [*in bronze*] of the Church, closes the view of the nave of St. Peter's Church, and cannot have failed to attract the attention of my readers. The shrine is in the form of a throne, and contains a chair, which the Prince of the Apostles is *supposed* to have occupied as Bishop of Rome."

"It is a tradition, certainly of great antiquity, that St. Peter was received in the house of the Senator Pudens, and there laid the foundation of the Roman Church" [*in the house!*] For this curious fact, your Grace refers us to "THE ACTS OF ST. PUDENTIANA." For this greatest of all human events, the less *learned* Christians would refer to "THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES." It is probable that from this fair and earliest saint of the Christian Church your Eminence may have borrowed the consecrated name of your adoption. St. Pudentiana and her sister St. Prassida were the daughters of the Senator Pudens; and haply, in the early vocation of your poetical piety, while wandering through the deep valley which separates the Esquiline Hill from the vineyards of the Viminal, you may have been struck with the beauty of the Church of St. Pudens and St. Pudentiana, raised upon the site of the Roman Senator's house, the tessellated pavement of which now forms the flooring of the lateral aisles. The picture of the fair saint and her sister Prassida (who is represented squeezing the blood of a martyr from a sponge) may have captivated your Celtic imagination; and as you

knelt at her altar, you may have vowed, that should you ever be raised to the rank of the "*Cardinalume*," * by the divine mercy of the Church of Rome, it should be by the style and title of St. Pudentiana.

Woman, my Lord Cardinal, has always been helpful and influential in the Church; from St. Pudentiana, ministering to the Prince of the Apostles, and the pious and magnificent Matilda, Countess of Tuscany, the ally of Gregory the Great, and the foundress of his power through her wealth and munificence, down to a recent convert of the active mission of the Propaganda in Pagan regions—the Bégum, Sombre. The funeral sermon of this Princess was preached by your Eminence, when a Bishop, with an earnest eloquence, which recalled the *Eloges Funèbres* of the Bossuets and Massillons, over the biers of the La Vallières and other fair penitents of the Court of Louis XIV. The Romans still talked, up to the time of Pio Nono's flight, (when they had something else to think about,) of the magnificent Catafalque, 60 feet in height, reared in the Church of San Carlo della Valle; of the statue of Religion which stood at its head; and of the commanding figure of your Eminence, who stood at its base, arrayed in your episcopal robes. You made no allusion to the past tenour of the life of this ex-Bayadère and recent Sovereign of one of the richest principalities in India. The wealthy Magdalen found favour in the Church's eyes, and "her sins were forgiven her; for she loved much," and made large oblations.

"The chair of St. Peter (continues your Emi-

* Alfieri.

nence) is precisely such a one as we *should have supposed* to be given by a wealthy Roman Senator to a ruler of the Church which he esteemed and protected." (The Senator was, however, only a convert *de la veille.*)* "It is of *wood,* almost entirely covered with ivory, so as to be justly considered a curule chair. It may be divided into two principal parts: the square or cubic portion, which forms the body; and the upright elevation behind, which forms the back. The former portion is four Roman palms in breadth across the front, two and a half at the side, and three and a half in height. It is formed by four upright posts, united together by transverse bars above and below. The sides are filled up by a species of arcade, consisting of two pilasters of carved wood, supporting, with the corner posts, three little arches. The front is extremely rich, being divided into eighteen small compartments disposed in three rows. Each contains a basso-relievo in ivory, of the most exquisite finish, surrounded by ornaments of the purest gold. These bassi-relievi represent, not the feats of Mohammed, or Ali, or Osman, or any other Paynim chieftain, as the readers of Lady Morgan might expect, unless they knew that the religion of the prophet does not tolerate any graven images at all,—but the exploits of the monster-killing Hercules. The back of the chair is formed by a series of pilasters supporting arches, as at the sides: the pillars here are three in number,

* St. Peter arrived in Rome, it is said, in the 44th year of the Christian era.

and the arches four. Above the cornice, which these support, rises a triangular pediment, giving to the whole a tasteful and architectural appearance. Besides the *bassi-relievi* above mentioned, the rest of the front, the mouldings of the back, and the tympanum of the pediment, are all covered with beautifully-wrought ivory. The chair, therefore, is manifestly of Roman workmanship, a curule chair, such as might be occupied by the Head of the Church, [St. Peter, the fisherman,] adorned with ivory and gold, as might befit the house of a wealthy Roman senator; while the exquisite finish of the sculpture forbids us to consider it more modern than the Augustan age, when the arts were in their greatest perfection. There is another circumstance which deserves particular mention in the description of this chair, and exactly corresponds to the time of St. Peter's first journey to Rome. This event took place in the reign of Claudius: and it is precisely at this period that, as Justus Lipsius has well proved, *sellæ agestatoriæ* began to be used by men of rank in Rome; for it is after this period that Tuetonius, Seneca, Tacitus, Juvenal, and Martial, mention the practice of being borne in chairs. This was done by means of rings placed at their sides, through which poles were passed; and thus the chair was carried by slaves, upon their shoulders. At each side of St. Peter's chair are two rings, manifestly intended for this purpose. Thus, while the workmanship of this venerable relic necessarily refers its date to an early period of the Roman Empire, this peculiarity fixes it at a period

not earlier than the reign of Claudius, in which St. Peter arrived at Rome."*

Such, my Lord Cardinal, are your *proofs* of the Augustan age of the relic; and the details, picturesque and minute, gorgeous and elaborate, would do honour to the inventories of a Mabillon, or a Montfaucon, a Walpole, or a George Robins,—all great writers in their several ways on similar subjects. Your description, however, though eloquent, is not original; for it is taken textually, literally, from a work which now lies before me upon my library table. It is an old-fashioned Latin work, by one who, like yourself, was a Prince of the Church, Cardinal Gregorio Cortese, and it bears the quaint title, "Of the Journey of the Prince of the Apostles to Rome, and of *his doings there!*" Perhaps I shall better bring it to your recollection by giving the title as it stands:—

"Gregorii Cortesii,
S. R. E. Cardinalis
De Romano Itinere
Gestisque
Principis Apostolorum,
Libri Duo."

But is it *probable*, my Lord, that St. Peter, the humble fisherman of Galilee, permitted himself to be seated or carried in this gorgeous chair, on the shoulders of slaves,† as his successor Pio Nino does

* "Remarks," &c.

† If the term Sellarii may be so construed. When Belisarius was so carried in one of his triumphs, he was carried by captives taken by him in war.

at this day?—he who had so recently heard his Divine Master declare that "foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head,"—he, to whose Eastern habits such a chair must have been repugnant! who had taught, not ex cathedrâ, but, like the Master he served, walking, or reclining on the lap of earth. The day was then far off, some three centuries, when the "servants of the servant of God" should repose in chairs of state, or mount thrones of ivory and gold. They had not as yet turned the judicial Basilicas of Pagan Rome into the gorgeous temples of public worship. If they sat upon a raised seat, it was a stone concealed in the catacombs or in caverns, as their perilous position dictated. The early Christians, the humble reformers of "cultes" Pagan or Jewish, which no longer served the purposes to which they had been destined, though still supported by the "Church" of Jupiter, and the "State" of the Cæsars, were the secret societies of those times of transition. Their Divine Philosophy was deemed treasonable and sacrilegious; and if Pudens, the Christian Senator, gave St. Peter a chair to teach from, it was more likely to be one of stone (like that in the Church of St. Peter at Venice), than a chair of ivory and gold carried on the shoulders of his fellow-creatures.

Before I proceed, I must quote a few words from the book which has served the purposes of both your Eminence and myself. "And because," says Francesco Maria Turrigio, (quoted in the Cardinal Cor-

tese's note, at page 317,) "because from great age St. Peter's chair was going to pieces, and had got somewhat *ricketty*, it was encompassed round with iron hoops, and with bars of wood." "It is, however, to be observed," continues Cardinal Cortese, "that Turrigio, accurate as he was, and always determined to *inspect with his own eyes* [a privilege denied both to your Eminence and to the Cardinal Cortese, as you assert the cover of the chair has not been raised for three centuries,] what he describes, was mistaken, when he said that those ornaments are made of metal or *pinchbeck* (aurichalco); for in real truth they are of fine gold: and this was proved by Alexander VII., who had it duly probed by men skilled in such matters, as is testified by Phœbeus, in page lxx. of his dissertation." *

This extravagant and sumptuous Pontiff was at that time doing the honours of Rome by his Royal convert, Queen Christina of Sweden, and as right royally as King Solomon did by the Queen of Sheba. The magnificent "*e diversi regalii*" he prepared for her, exceeded in expense even the celebrated *Carousel* of Louis XIV. Among other presents offered by the gallant Pontiff, to the *spirituele* Queen, was a *silver carriage*, sculptured by the great Bernini, and which, with the six horses that drew it and the coachmen and lacqueys, was all draped and dressed in celestial blue velvet, brocaded with silver." The Sunday following

* "Ex purissimo auro revera sunt, quod Alexandri VII. jussu à viris peritis compertum sua ætate, fuisse testatur."—*Phœbeus*, pag. lxx. *Laudatæ Dissertationis.*

the Royal conversion, his Holiness entertained her with a public dinner, and a drama "*recitatoli in musica eccellentemente.*"*

Still further, your Eminence seems to have passed over the curious anecdote given by Cardinal Cortese: that "Bishops, from the earliest Christian ages, were buried with their chairs; that they were carried to the grave seated in them; and that these chairs, especially those of the Apostles of Christ, sometimes were drawn out of the charnel gloom (*ex tenebris in lucem erutas*), and so venerated and worshipped, that the successors of a Bishop, when they were elected, were solemnly *chaired* upon them,"†—an ostentatious ceremony impossible in the early days of Christian depression. ‡

Your Eminence then proceeds to give the moral grounds of the probable identity of the chair, by the testimonies of Eusebius, in the fourth century; Nicephorus, Vallerius, and other great and grave names, "*qui finissent en* us," (as Boileau has it;)—"testimonies which," you observe, "are, I trust, more than sufficient to overthrow the foolish story with

* *Platina, Vite de Pontifice*, page 874.

† Cortese, page 313, and note.

‡ I beg to add one more description of this chair, by one of the greatest modern authorities, "Cattedra, 16. Il Bernini fu l' architetto di questa imponente machina. Essa è tutta in bronzo," &c. &c. "Il tutto è in parte dorato, con disposizione grandiosa edi bell' eftello, e devesi alla munificenza di Alessando VII., li cui stemmi vedonsi nè piedistalli, che sorreggono li detti dottori, e contornano l' altare. La fusione di questo lavoro fu assidata a Gio. Aretusi, che vi travagliò 3 anni continui."—*Marchese Guiseppe Melchiorri.*

which Lady Morgan has treated her readers." But there is one old saint whom you have omitted to refer to, who has always come forward in my defence, whenever I have been "had up" by the Sbirri of Holy Offices, before that great and *infallible* judge—the Public; I mean, my Lord, *Saint* VERITAS,—one, perhaps, who is better known among the army of martyrs, than in the Church's accredited Calendar of Saints!

"Thus far, then," you observe, "it is evident that this chair is precisely such a one as the antiquarian would expect to find, claiming the honour of having been the episcopal throne of the first Roman Pontiff. This alone would be sufficient to overthrow the calumnious statement of Lady Morgan; and the confutation will be much more complete, when we give the grounds of moral probability that it is the identical chair used for this purpose."

Your Eminence then goes on to prove that such objects were not merely meant as curiosities, nor the custom of reverencing them solely Catholic; for you cite from a cotemporary periodical of your Remarks the following passage:—"We are told there is still preserved, in Lutterworth Church, Wickliffe's chair, together with the pulpit from which he was accustomed to preach, a piece of his cloak, and an oak table which belonged to him. What is the meaning of these objects being kept in a Protestant Church?"

Wickliffe! Before that august name the mind pauses in instinctive reverence! It recalls the light

that first dawned upon the human intellect, in the darkest ages of ignorance and superstition, of moral prostration and physical suffering! — ages whose annals are steeped in blood!—ages of the rack and of the faggot, of the dungeon and the cell, of the despotism of dogmas! the tyranny of irresponsible power! The *Bassi Tempi!* the mediæval times! which work up so well in the picturesque architecture of Boudoir-Churches, got up by fashionable *Decorateurs*, (those modern restorers of "Christian art,") and which tell in the tapestry of saintly Elegantes for the ornament of their domestic oratories; but which were, nevertheless, times that surpass in ignorance and crime, in suffering and oppression, all that the historians of the antique world have left on record, from the books of Moses to the volumes of Herodotus.

In alluding to Wickliffe, your Eminence has awakened associations not easily lulled. John Wickliffe was the EVANGELIST of the Reformation! the teacher of free inquiry! the champion of private judgment! and, after Magna Charta, the great supporter of constitutional liberty!—that instinct of the *Race* to which he belonged. He was the first who gave to the people of England, in their own fine Saxon English, those "Gospel truths," till then hidden from them in learned languages, known only to the Priesthood, and some few of the educated of the descendants of the Norman Barons. He was the first of his order who felt and thought and wrote for the people: and his "*Pauper Rusticus*," or "The Poor

Caitiff," was a volume of tracts which well deserves the title of "*The Poor Man's Library;*" containing the "Mirroure of Maydens," which fathers of families may *still* put into their children's hands; and the clever tract against "Able Beggary!"—a blow to the powerful influence of the new order of begging friars, never parried. He replaced the jargon of the schoolmen, whose abstraction and subtilty had superseded the perspicuous simplicity with which the first Christian teachers had explained the doctrines of salvation, by the logic of common sense; while his own *Quæstiones Logicæ* might have puzzled a Cardinal, even of these days!

For a time his fortune and great reputation went hand in hand together. He protected his sovereign, the gallant Edward III., against PAPAL AGGRESSION, by defending the Crown against the humiliating demands of the Pope, Urban VI., who was continually disposing of the ecclesiastical benefices and dignities in England. But Edward was not a Prince addicted to the slavery of the See of Rome. He kept a vigilant eye over Papal usurpation! and rewarded and protected *him* who so ably wrote against that usurpation, by bestowing on him the living of Lutterworth, and even sending him to Rome (with the Bishop of Bangor) on the honourable mission for treating of *the liberties of the Church of England.*

Notwithstanding all this royal favour and princely protection, Wickliffe fell under the persecutions of the Papal Court. The Pontiff resolved to silence the Reformer; and though supported by the great Duke

of Lancaster, Earl Percy, and the Queen-Mother, he fell a victim to his own virtues and moral courage; and the author of so many glorious works in the cause of Truth was cited by Pope Urban VI. to appear before the awful Apostolical tribunal at Rome! Death, a natural death, saved him from further persecution. He was seized, while officiating in his church at Lutterworth, with his death illness, and expired three days after. His body was buried in the chancel of his church: but it was afterwards disinterred, by order of a decree of the Council of Constance, in the year 1415, when, after forty-five articles of his pure and fearless doctrines had been condemned, he himself was pronounced, in the name of the Council, to have died an obstinate heretic; and his bones were ordered to be dug up, (if they could be distinguished from the bones of the faithful,) and thrown into the flames. The brutal sentence was not put in act till the year 1428, when Pope Martin V. commanded Fleming, Bishop of Lincoln, to execute the decree of the Council. His remains were accordingly disinterred, then burnt, and afterwards cast into the Swift,—a streamlet which ran by Lutterworth. It is not now possible to ascertain whether any monument was ever erected to his memory: if any frail memorial of this kind had once marked the spot of his interment, it doubtless was destroyed by the same hands which tore his body out of its awful depository.*

* Memoirs of the Life of Dr. Wickliffe, by the Rev. Henry Hervey Baber, M. A.

It was reserved for the present time to revive and consecrate the name of him who took the initiative in philosophy—of Bacon; in religious reformation—of Luther. The beautiful basso-relievo which now illustrates the rustic, quiet church of Lutterworth, was an offering made by a private committee of gentlemen to the memory of its immortal Rector; and was executed by an English sculptor, who honours the great artistic name he inherits as his birthright. *

While the remains of Wickliffe were thus scattered on the waters, the *preservation* of his chair seems doubtful. If it ever held a place in the church of Lutterworth, it is there no longer. But if it were, it is no proof, that because a wooden piece of furniture existed from the fifteenth century till the present, that a similar object *might* exist from the *first half* of the first century of the Christian era—from the reign of Augustus Cæsar, to the reign of Pope Pius IX. in the nineteenth.

This resistance of Wickliffe to the Papal power, then at its height, and of his heroic Sovereign to Papal aggression, is a proof, if such were wanting, that Catholic England was, from its earliest times, *Anti-Papal.* Even King John, craven as he was in many instances, was

"Every inch a king,"

when Rome threatened him with aggression. Shak-

* Richard Westmacott, Esq.

speare, the truest chronicler of English feelings, does but repeat the words of John himself, when he makes him say, in answer to the Pope's emissary, Cardinal Pandulph,—

> "Tell him this tale,
> And from the *mouth* of England
> Add thus much more,—that no Italian priest
> Shall tythe or toll in our dominions!"

But I offer a thousand apologies for this long digression. It is the inherent fault of female authorship, as of female life, to give way to these outbursts of feeling on particular subjects of their favourite opinions which deranges all logical sequence, and renders their style inaccurate, even when their judgment is right. I return to your Eminence's luminous pages.

Your Eminence continues, — "It will perhaps appear to my readers, that the confutation of Lady Morgan's mis-statement ought to end here. But there is one point, which I think may be still wanting to satisfy the incredulity of some of her admirers. The story, these will say, may not be perfectly correct; but it is impossible that it should not have had some foundation in fact. In the Church of St. Peter at Venice, which was the Patriarchal Church till 1807, has long been preserved a chair of stone, called by the people the Chair of St. Peter. It is not upon any altar, but stands against the wall, between the second and third altars. In 1749, Flaminio Cornaro, or Cornelius, published his '*Ecclesiæ Venetæ Antiqua Monumenta.*' In the second volume, page 194, is an engraving of this monument, accompanying

his description of it. The history which he gives is the same as is recorded upon a tablet over the chair, —that it was given by the Emperor Michael to the Doge, Peter Grandonicus, in 1310. The back of the chair was, however, adorned with a rich cufic inscription, and Cornaro desired the learned Jos. Assemani to decipher it for his work. It is useless to attempt to account for or excuse the erroneous interpretation which he gave. One thing is evident, that he did not wish by it to encourage any deceit. The writing contained, according to his reading, several portions of the second Psalm; and among them the words, 'The work of Abdalla, the servant of God,'—and, 'Antioch, the city of God.' The learned Orientalist Horberg, in the main, confirmed this explanation. Upon the calculations which Assemani made in consequence of this inscription, Cornaro came to the following conclusion regarding the date of the monument. This chair, therefore, was constructed in the eighth century; nor assuredly was it ever used by the Prince of the Apostles, nor by any of his successors, in the See of Antioch, before the year 742."*

"Here then is laid open the origin of Lady Morgan's foolish and wicked tale. The stone chair, called by the vulgar that of St. Peter, and kept in the Patriarchal Church of that Apostle in Venice, has been confounded with the ivory throne of the Vatican Basilic, by some blundering or malicious person. The story has been repeated to her Ladyship: she

* "Remarks," page 28.

deemed it too well suited to her purposes of misrepresentation to merit examination, and gave it to the public with all the assurance which points, and all the levity which wings, the worst shafts of calumny. There is something truly profligate in her waste of human character, whether we consider her assassinating of private reputations by personal anecdote, or cutting down whole classes of men, as in the instance I have been confuting." * (Here follows a quotation from Horace, more becoming to a Heathen Satirist than a Christian Bishop, and of which I will spare you the repetition.)

My Lord, I thank you for the indulgence with which your Eminence offers me the benefit of this "ignorant mistake," (and never did the Church grant a more gratuitous one!) but I decline profiting by it. My "foolish and wicked story of the chair" was no mistake—of mine at least. It was related to me, and accepted in the most implicit faith, on the authority of two of the greatest Travellers, Antiquarians, and Virtuosi of their age, who were of that illustrious corps of Savans, the friends and companions in Peace, and the intellectual staff in War, of the Emperor Napoleon—Denon and Champollion.

The night before our departure from Paris for Italy, on our first, last, and memorable visit, many distinguished — I may say illustrious — men were assembled in our drawing-room in the Rue de Helder. Every one was offering an opinion as to

* "Habakkuk est capable de tout!"—*Voltaire.*

the objects most worthy of our notice,—when the Baron Denon, who, in one of the happiest phases of the most brilliant *raconteur* of his time, had been describing his visit to the Inquisition, when he accompanied Buonaparte into Spain, and when, satiated with the rueful relics which that awful place revealed to his antiquarian curiosity, he fell asleep on the table of the terrible Hall of Council, where he actually passed the night,—then related the anecdote of the discovery of the Chair of St. Peter, adding, "The inscription was in a cufic character, that puzzled even Champollion and the most learned Arabic scholars of the Institut." And thus, "I told the tale as it was told to me," carelessly and fearlessly, which has drawn down on my work the Anathema of your Eminence's "Remarks on Lady Morgan's Statements *regarding** St. Peter's Chair."

In defence of the sacrilegious French I have nothing to say. They showed as little delicacy towards the Sagro Cateno, the most sacred relic of the Church of San Lorenzo, of Genoa, as they did to the Chair of St. Peter. Till the arrival of those meddling Savans, "qui se mêloient de tout," the Sagro Cateno had passed for a dish made "of one entire and perfect emerald," which had served at the Last Supper, and was forbidden to human touch. The French first asserted it had been part of the spoil taken by the Crusaders at Cæsarea, in the twelfth century; but when it was carried to Paris,

* Regarding! "*Dans ce mot là, je reconnais mon sang.*"

and presented to the Institut, being subjected to the test of scientific scrutiny, it proved to be a piece of green glass,—a pious fraud which had escaped the discovery of ages!

I trust, my Lord Cardinal, that in my desire to defend myself against your imputations of being "false, foolish, slanderous, and profligate," though I feel conscious that I was only indiscreet,—I trust, I say, that I have written nothing offensive to your feelings, nor even to your prejudices; for such I cannot but consider your passionate adherence to objects merely material, and relics more than doubtful. This "last infirmity of a noble mind" exhibited itself even in the beautiful and solemn ceremonial of your recent Enthronization. When you "ascended the pulpit, having your mitre on your head, and your crozier in your hand, and your train held up by Deacons, the Rev. Mr. F. Leare and the Rev. Mr. J. Wenham," and addressed your immense congregation with an eloquence all your own, you at once rushed into the subject of the Chair. "The Church's type," the "Episcopal seat," the "chair," the "throne," the "fixed, stable, immovable, *well built up* throne," is throughout your discourse presented to the imagination of your hearers. Descending to "the very Catacombs themselves," you find it with delighted surprise "in front of the altar," and "*above* the very tombs of the martyrs," in that "the first abode of sublime Christian truth." Emerging from these hiding-places, it "re-appears in the magnificent temples snatched from the Heathen, and the gor-

geous Basilicas which yet remain a monument of early Christian zeal." But whether in darkness or in light, in the day of persecution or that of triumph, "symbolizing still, by the stability of the seat, and the permanency of the session, the everlasting unity and sameness of the doctrines there to be taught." "Thus then, my brethren," adds your Eminence, "came the idea of the Pontifical chair or seat to be associated with the discharge of the great office of a Bishop; and that word, which at first signified only the chair in which he sat, came by degrees to be synonymous with the extent of his jurisdiction."

It is impossible, my Lord, to read these eloquent disquisitions on seats, chairs, and thrones, and not to feel what was the intense and all-absorbing idea of your life—the *Eureka of your calculations.*

In this power of concentration, "the binding up of all the corporal faculties" to one intent, lies the secret of success! It was this one all-pervading idea of his life that originated the FLYING CHAIR of Friar Bacon* (as the immovable one of your Eminence). Among other sublime results of the scientific discoveries of this prodigy of the 13th century;—the chair which after the lapse of ages becomes a practical fact,—which receives and accommodates all ranks and classes, from princes to paupers,—which, "anni-

* Roger Bacon, a Franciscan friar, the prophet of experimental philosophy! the one bright particular star, that shone upon the dark horizon of his time. His discoveries drew on him the fear and hatred of his fraternity: he was accused of dealing with the devil, stripped of his Professorship at Oxford, and imprisoned in the cell of his convent till within a few years of his death.

hilating both space and time," multiplies its utilities and comforts *ad infinitum* for the general advantage of society,—*the Flying Chair, of a Railway Train!* It is, again, to this wondrous power, this intensity of one great idea, worked out to its utmost application, that the apparent miraculous mystery of the Electric Telegraph is due!—that great *moral agent* of the present day, which rushes to the aid of justice, detecting by a flash the fact which confounds crime, and unmasks hypocrisy,—that answers the queries of restless devotion, and anticipates the anxieties of love,

> "Speeds the soft intercourse from soul to soul,
> And wafts a sigh from Indus to the Pole."

Powers, my Lord, undreamed of in the antique times, are now developed in nature, for the benefit of humanity, through the superior talent of the gifted, and through the influence of THAT, which, after all, must be considered as the most certain effect, and the most efficacious cause, of civilization and progress,—I mean the Press! The tedious voyages of Ulysses and Æneas are now pleasure trips for holiday-making tradesmen; and even St. Paul's voyage with the troops of Cæsar, sailing from Adramyttium to Puteoli, hugging the coast from port to port, occupied more time, than now suffices to cross the steep Atlantic, and the *then* unknown Pacific, or to reach those greater worlds then undiscovered, which are now so flourishing and so free, so civilized and so prosperous!

Even Art, divine Art, now no longer restricts her

exquisite powers to founding a spiritual faith through the medium of the senses. She no longer works exclusively for churches or palaces, for the galleries of the great, or the oratories of the saintly; but submits to be useful, as well as sublime, and spreads her pictorial knowledge for the benefit and delight of the million over all regions: while her noblest emanation, Architecture, resorts to new elements of construction, and, no longer "breathing a browner horror o'er the woods," by raising "hallowed walls," for the incarceration of ignorance or power, she now exhibits her Crystal Temple, dedicated to Human Industry! not concealing, but revealing, the ingenuity of the mighty enterprise, where thousands are working with courageous pertinacity, animated by the cheering spirit of National Enthusiasm! This, at least, is a Temple raised with no *arrière pensée*, or selfish view of personal aggrandizement; but in the universal interest of a brotherhood of nations! All honour be to the mind that conceived, and the genius that worked out the conception of this great Moral Edifice! which entombs no youth, all palpitating with life and passion! nor glooms declining age with visionary terrors! The Paraclete! where

> "No weeping orphan sees his father's stores
> The shrines irradiate and emblaze the floors;
> Nor silver saints, by dying misers given,
> To bribe the rage of unrequited Heaven;"*—

that great combination, which has given to mechanical science its highest development, and left the calculations of Archimedes far behind in their results.

* Pope.

These, my Lord Cardinal, are the Miracles of the age WE live in!—miracles, worked out, not by the assumed subversion of the laws of nature, but in consonance with their mighty operations, and in consciousness of their infinite resources. Knowledge now holds the place of dogmas, and scatters *her* illuminated missals over the known world, so that all who live, may learn: and Superstition! that cross between craft and ignorance,

> "Who from the rending earth and bursting skies
> Saw Gods descend and Fiends infernal rise;
> With Heaven's own thunder shook the world below,
> And played the God, an engine on the foe;"*—

Superstition! shrinks within her cowl, and vanishes before the light of Truth, like one of the dark phantoms she had herself created to tax the ignorant credulity of her dupes.

* Pope. If the splendid verses of Pope "come skipping rank and file" to the *point* of my pen, it is, that I have just benefited (in common with the honest and enlightened members of the Mechanics' Institution of Leeds) from the Lectures lately delivered by the Earl of Carlisle,—as noble and philanthropic a lecturer as ever lured popular attention, through the music of poetry, to the civilizing influence of the highest order of literature! Alexander Pope was a Roman Catholic, in the worst times of the penal statutes, enforced against his religion! And it is curious to remark, that while he was loved and honoured by the greatest statesmen, prelates, and wits of his own time in England, his works were inscribed on the *Index Expurgatorius* of Rome! His dogma of "Whatever is, is best," was assigned as the cause! Pope is the most eminently polished and brilliant of British Classics! and his Defence by Lord Byron, and his Eloge by Lord Carlisle, are noble indemnities, for the condemnation of the Holy Office of Rome, —and even, for the temporary neglect of young England, to whose fathers the verses of Pope were as familiar as "Household Words."

My Lord, in an age like this, there is no standing still, nor going backward! The world will neither stop nor retrograde. The spirit of movement, instinct in man in all times, which led Israel with HER great Reformer to abandon the "fleshpots of Egypt," and risk the privations of the Wilderness; The spirit which made Catholic England, and monastic Ireland, anti-Papal for ages,* when the power of Papacy was greatest; The spirit which armed the always restive Gallican Church,† and called forth wit and philosophy from monastic seclusion, to enlighten and delight the world by "Les Lettres Provinciales,"‡ against the Bull Unigenitus; though Kings and their concubines allied themselves with Popes and Prelates for its support;—that spirit glows more brightly than ever, throughout enlightened Europe. For the sole of the foot of ignorant bigotry there is no longer a resting-place; but there is a highway open, my Lord, for enterprising Genius and earnest and honest intentions, which your Eminence *might* tread with a glory, to satisfy even your vaulting ambition, without the risk of its overleaping itself. Could you but consent "for the nonce" to

* See the "History of the Norman Conquest," by the greatest historian of modern times—Augustus Thierry, vols. 1 and 2.

† See "History of the Gallican Church," by Gregoire, Bishop of Blois.

‡ See "*Les Lettres Provinciales*," du Pere Blaise Pascal. They are, says a French critic, "un melange de plaisanterie fine, et d'eloquence forte, du sel de Molière, et de la dialectique de Bossuet." While the accomplished Brotherhood of the *Porte Royale* sought by their diatribes against Jesuitism, to render the Jesuits odious, Pascal did more,—he rendered them *ridiculous!*

leave behind you "your consecrated Chairs and immovable Tables," the fittest furniture for catacombs and caverns,—to leave your fallible Pope under the protection of 12,000 French bayonets, 25,000 grim Austrians, and his faithful motley *Garde du Corps* of Swiss supernumeraries: (types of Rome's ancient barbarian invaders, the Gauls and Tuetons:)—would you but turn *your* steps to the beautiful land of your race, Ireland!—There, my Lord, *there* is much to do, that might be best done, by one who, like yourself, shares the religion and idiosyncrasy of the people. Remember that all the great Reformers of Christian times, were reared in the cloister or issued from the Church. Savonarola,* the apostle of religious and patriotic independence in Italy; Wickliffe in England; Luther in Germany; and Father Mathew in Ireland! who

* Savonarola, a Dominican monk, of a noble family, and great genius, directed his powers to the reformation of the Church; and was condemned to be burnt for his sermons on the Papal despotism and corruption of the time, which he delivered in the pulpits of Florence, with the inspiration of a Jeremiah, and the eloquence of a Demosthenes! He predicted the Reformation of the sixteenth century. He declaimed against the Clergy of the Court of Rome,—demanded a Council to debate on the deposition of the reigning Pontiff, Alexander VI.,—and scoffed at the excommunication which forbid him to preach any more. Various lives of Savonarola, written in the spirit of the different factions of Rome, are still extant—one by the celebrated PIC DE LA MIRANDOLE, who paints him as "un Saint à prodiges!"—another by the learned TIRABOSCHI, who describes him as "*un homme qui declame avec fureur contre un Pontif, à la verité tres vicieux*, mais que toute l'Eglise reconnaissait pour son chef," &c. Whatever were Savonarola's faults, even in the eyes of his opponents, his atrocious and unjust punishment excited disgust and horror, even in those times of cruelty and injustice! He was condemned and executed May 1498.

improved upon the partial restrictions of St. Patrick* himself, and effected a Reform, once deemed impossible by Church or State,—the Reform of Temperance! boldly appealing from Ireland drunk, to Ireland sober, in testimony of her *undisguised* excellence!

Here, my Lord, your presence is an anomaly! A few years back, under the penal enactments of the times, it would have been according to the authority of the greatest lawyers of the day—High Treason! Your very appearance in your picturesque costume, imposed by the *mise en scene* of a Church the most pictorial of all others, is even *now*—a Misdemeanour! Your See of Westminster is

"A sound signifying nothing!"

and the maniloquent titles bestowed on you, through "the divine mercies of Rome," are only available in England in the private circles of your own Flock, where kneeling ladies kiss your extended hand, reversing all laws of the courtesy of nations.† But in Ireland, a legitimate and noble mission is open to you! There, as Doctor Wiseman, Doctor of Divinity, the learned, pious, and accomplished dignitary of the ancient and now flourishing Church of seven millions of Irish Catholics, you might replace the vulgar and perverting oratory of the Priest-Tribunes of the day, who inflame the passions of their followers with those coarse but kindling appeals which come

* I allude to the old Irish toast—"Long life to St. Pathrick! who put the fast on the MATE, and not on the WHISHKEY."

† A ceremony never performed by ladies in Rome.

"Warm from the bog, and faithful to its fires;"

and by substituting your own polished eloquence and profound reasoning powers, you might and could dispel the dark ignorance of the lower classes—source of their crimes, as of their prostration to the influence of men, who inculcate no peace from the pulpit, and send no penitent from the Confessional! to arrest crime, or disperse conspiracy!

But here, my Lord Cardinal, in this great Metropolis of the World, you must have observed that your presence can only rouse the national spirit against foreign aggression, to the extreme of popular excitement, or awaken the ancient antipathies of England against Papal interference—even to intolerance! Before your fatal mission from the Chair of the Vatican, and ever since the passing of the great Charter of Catholic Emancipation,—INVIOLABLE BE IT HOPED AS

"That thing John signed at Runnymede,"—

all distinctions and differences, social, civil, and political, between Catholic and Protestant, had melted away throughout the Empiré; or had become mere matter of history, only occasionally resorted to by the shallow and discontented, for temporary and selfish purposes; or from a morbid passion for notoriety of whatever kind,—that disease inherent in the Irish temperament.—Here, my Lord, the recent aggression of your ill-advised Pontiff, who has been restored *to*, and is kept *on* his own throne by foreign arms, may have dangerous consequences, provoked more by outward forms and exterior seemings than by

any innate bigotry of the people of England to the Catholic laity of the realm, for whom the most perfect respect and good-will is entertained and professed. But in Ireland! if your mission be to preach the Gospel of Peace! to inculcate the doctrine of Education! (not the education of the cloister—learning without knowledge, and intellectual prostration in place of free enquiry,)—In Ireland, my Lord, all parties and sects will welcome your advent; and you may do more good for your own country than all the *Cardinali Prottettori* of the *sacred college* ever effected, for the nations they have represented, for centuries. You may open the book of Universal History to the Catholic youth of all classes of the land, who will eagerly group around a distinguished Pastor of their own faith,—they will learn patiently from you, to compare wretched Ireland as of old—the gift of a Pope whom she did not *then* acknowledge as her master, to a foreign invader whom she considered as her insolent foe;—you may show them Ireland, during successive ages of a barbarous despotism, quailing and suffering under the Catholic sway of the Houses of Plantagenet, of York, of Lancaster, of Tudor, and of Stuart, —all alike oppressive and extortionate through their delegated representatives, who, from the De Lacys, to the Straffords, lashed them into those rebellions, for purposes of forfeiture, which originated the penal statutes of a Protestant legislation;—you may bid them

"Look upon *that* picture, then on *this!*"

The picture of their present happy and dignified

condition, partaking of all the blessings of a free and constitutional government, without one of the humiliating restrictions which still keep Nobles slaves in Russia, and dependants in Austria! Recall to them that they are now, as an integral part of the greatest Empire in the world, participating in all its lofty distinctions, and enjoying all the advantages of civil, religious, and political liberty, — without one fragment of a cruel and despotic penal code, remaining, to impede them in their great career of honour, and ambition; or of the respectable pursuits of honest industry;—Lords Chancellors, Chief Justices, Attorneys, and Solicitors-General, Privy Councillors, Military Commanders by sea and land, Governors of Colonies, Ministers of State, Ambassadors, domestic inmates of the Court of their Sovereign, and, above all, Legislators!—all offices, legislative and professional, open to them! Available for all orders of honorary distinction, from the Garter of King Edward, to the ribbon of St. Patrick; and *unavailable* only, for superseding the Primate of Ireland in his pulpit of Armagh, or turning His Grace of Canterbury from that altar where Thomas à Becket was murdered! Show them that, even when troublesome and froward, as petted prodigals spoiled by unaccustomed indulgence, the "sons of Erin" sometimes break out in fits of boisterous discontent, still they are readily forgiven if repentant, and temperately punished if recusant!

Still more, you could teach them, my Lord, as a matter of taste, as well as of truth, to reject with con-

tempt the proffered ignorance of the Synods of Thurles and the Schools of Tuam. Teach them, fearlessly, that the *sun does not move,* nor the world stand still, whatever the most Right Reverend of Astronomers —who has recently measured the sun's disk with the precision of a mercer measuring silk — may assert to the contrary! Encourage them to profit by those noble and bountiful Institutions, established without reference to creed, sect, or class, which their enlightened Sovereign, and her lettered and liberal Government, have opened for their reception and benefit, in common with their Protestant and Dissenting compatriots. Tell them that these Seminaries *are not* "Godless;" for the book of knowledge is—God's own book! disclosing to man the laws as well as the glories of his Creation.

Invite them as men, as gentlemen — as the young Chivalry of Ireland — to remember the day, not "of old," when their Queen came among them, in Royal progress to the hearts and homes of seven millions of Catholic subjects, and their Protestant fellow-countrymen, without "fear of let or molestation," to use the words of the old Irish passport of "*the times of the troubles.*" Let it be for ever remembered, she came cordially and fearlessly, seeking that "*Ceâd mille falthe,*" which the Irish so simultaneously gave her, while the embers of a scarce extinguished and rubbishy incendiarism, were yet flickering over the soil.—She came, to be received with unostentatious hospitality by her own Representative, who made himself responsible for the loy-

alty of the people, and the safety of their Queen, to the British Empire and the World at large; and his judgment was justified by the result.—She came with a fearless spirit and affectionate confidence, which recalled the best days of her great prototype in political decision, as in jealousy for her country's honour; Queen Elizabeth,—described by one of our greatest modern writers, in words which it delights a woman's heart to copy:—

"Her only effectual ally was the spirit of her people; and her policy flowed from that magnanimous nature, which in the hour of peril teaches better lessons than those of cold reason. Her great heart inspired her with the higher and nobler wisdom which disdained to appeal to the low and sordid passions of her people, even for the protection of their interests. In a righteous cause, she roused those generous affections which alone teach boldness, constancy, and foresight, and which are therefore the only safe guardians of the lowest as well as the highest interests of a nation." *

My Lord, I will stop here. The emotions aroused by this portrait of a female Sovereign, so worthy to reign over a great people, are of too proud and pleasant a nature to permit of my recurring to a subject less gracious and more personal. It was my intention to have summed up my evidences in favour of my defence against the "Remarks" made by your Eminence, with more asperity than your sobered judgment may perhaps now approve. But I hasten to "*levar l'inco-*

* Sir James Mackintosh.

modo," as a Roman *seccatore*, or *professional bore*, always observes, when he has exhausted his tediousness upon the patience of his wearied audience; and to resign myself with due submission to the fiat of that judge, by whose decision we must both abide,—Public Opinion!

I have the honour to be, my Lord Cardinal,
With great respect,
Your Eminence's obedient humble Servant,
SYDNEY MORGAN.

LONDON,
26th December, 1850.

POSTSCRIPT.

January 12th 1851.

Among a shower of newspapers and periodicals which at this moment fall around me (and I am grateful for the attention that has been given, and the indulgence that has been shown, to a rapidly-written pamphlet, devoted to an humble defence against unmerited accusations,) some have suggested possible liabilities, to future animadversions; and the demand for a second edition of the foregoing pages, before I suspected that half the first could have

been disposed of, permits me, in an hurried Post-script, to reply to those kind critics, who have politely "hinted a fault," or *hesitated* a doubt, as to the authenticity of an anecdote, which excited no particular attention at the time it was first published, and which left no record of the fact—no *proces verbal dressé*, to call for inquiry, or to *constater*, the truth or falsehood, of the narration.

With respect to these suggestions, I confess such things could not

> "Pass o'er us like a summer cloud,
> Without our special wonder,"

in *this* hour of Papal resumption, and Romanism, "à la mode,"—when a thousand *reams* are ready to start from the bandages of the Excise Office, for the protection of a relic, and a thousand pens rush to their inkstands to justify a tradition; and when the Papal Power—reseated on its own throne (accorded to it, if not by St. Peter, at least by Constantine the Great*)—puts forth its long paralysed arm, to dispose of other "*thrones, dominions, princedoms, virtues, powers*," as in the time of the Gregories and Alexanders;—in such times, such an event as the uncovering the chair in the Basilica of the Vatican, might well cause a sensation, at least among the young sucking fathers of the semi-Papal Church of Puseyism.

* There are no lines of Dante so often recited by the modern Italians as his famous apostrophe to the Emperor Constantine:—

> "Ahi! Constantine, de quanto mal fu matre,
> *Non la tua conversion*, ma quella *dote*
> Che da te prese il primo ricco Patro."

But all historical discrepancies may be reconciled by reference to the circumstances of the times to which they relate.

When the Baron Denon and his learned colleague left for a moment the *spolia optimè* of the Palace of the Vatican, to enjoy a little antiquarian lark,—of which the chair of St. Peter was the object,—the destinies of society (shaken in those volcanic times to its centre) were dependent on other views, and other results, than ever before, or since, occupied the mind of man. "There were giants in those days;" and though, like other giants, they fell when their agency was over,—still they fell not, before they had done their work;—and having "exhausted old worlds," had opened the way and cleared the atmosphere for the WORLD AS IT NOW STANDS! protected in its integrity by science, enlightened by knowledge, enamoured of peace, ambitious of order, and largely and finely organized for the development of all those sympathies, (hitherto the dream, only, of moral and social philosophy,) by which the universal condition of mankind is to be blessed and bettered.

At the close of the eighteenth century, the armies of France, who had hymned their national chorus in their march over the Alps, conquered Romagna, passed the Rubicon, and entered the Porta Popula of Rome, to parade in the Champs de Mars of the Cæsars, resembled in nothing the barbarian Gauls, so sternly received by the Conscript Fathers in antique times; nor even the Germans, who, more recently, under the arch-traitor, the Constable de

Bourbon, desecrated the shrines of St. Peter's, even in the great conservative age of "La Rennaissance" itself.

The French armies had already made an education of circumstances. They had halted to applaud with loud *vivats* the Pyramids in the plains of Egypt, where they were poetically told that "Forty Centuries looked down upon them;" and they approached the glorious monuments of modern Rome with a respectful admiration, which amounted to reverential enthusiasm.*

The testimonies of the Romans themselves did justice to the moderation of their French victors, and described the French soldiers buying white gloves to visit the galleries of the Vatican, while they trod with noiseless steps, "*where sceptred angels held their residence.*"

The exquisite Loggie di Raffaello, with all their immortal works, were saved by General Murat from utter destruction.† The Halls of the Busts, and of the Muses — the Museums of the Chiramonte and Clementini—pavements of mosaic—roofs of

* See "Latium," by Baron Bonsteittan.

† "When Murat arrived in Rome with his army, his first visit was to the Loggie of Raphael; and perceiving how much the paintings were injured, by being exposed for ages to the action of the air and inclemency of the weather, (for, like Italian loggie, these were open colonnades,) he ordered the whole side which was open to be framed and sashed with handsome windows. This work was completed in fourteen days; and had it not been done during his occupation, it is probable it would never have been finished."—*Italy*, vol. ii., p. 205.

cobalt and gold—columns of porphyry and alabaster—vases of lapis lazuli and Parian marble—the Laocoon—the Torso—the Apollo Belvedere, and objects equally sublime and beautiful, were viewed, but untouched, by the French troops, in silent admiration; and when these glorious works of art and genius, which might have been carried away as the spoils of conquest, were peaceably ceded by Pope Pius the Sixth (at the Treaty of Tolentino), a Commission of Fine Arts was instituted to superintend their removal, protected—by the Pope himself! "He did more; for in order to reconcile the Romans to their loss, he not only employed the eloquent and celebrated preacher Monsignóre Tenai, of the Congregation of the Mission, to preach them into resignation, and erected stations in the streets for the purpose,—but while the Apollo was packing up, occupied their attention by preaching himself, declaring that St. Paul commended the breaking of statues, and Constantine had ordered their public sale as a mark of his contempt; that it was the Cross and the Virgin, not Gods and Goddesses, that should engross the attention of true Christians; and that it was not the shrines of their Saints, but the statues of the Capitol, which brought heretics to their holy city, and their bad example among the elect of St. Peter. The Pope preached,—the people listened; and the statues were permitted to depart with as little sensation as they were seen to return."*

Under such great and anxious *surveillance*, the

* *Italy*, vol ii., p. 263.

circumstance of the discovery of the "ricketty" Chair of St. Peter might have been well overlooked; and the act of removing the Apollo of Belvedere, from the pedestal where Michael Angelo had placed it,—the taking down the *Capi d'Opere* of Raffaelle, of Dominicheno, of Guido, and of all the great masters of the master age of art, to place them in their travelling sarcophagii, *en route* for Paris, may be a sufficient plea for the anecdote of the old chair being reserved for future and quieter days, to be "*raconté*" for the amusement of a Parisian salon, or inserted in some gossiping page, such as that to which it has found its way.

Thus guarded, and thus consigned, departed those glorious trophies—

> "Inimitable on earth,
> By model, or by shading pencil drawn;"

and if the chair bestowed by the Senator Pudens on St. Peter, or the statue of the Prince-Apostle (late Jupiter Capitolinus), accompanied the immortal cargo, does not appear on the inventories I have seen,—or if they once did on others, they were soon *forgotten.* But the greatest *consignment*—the type of the highest power, human or divine, ascribed to man—soon followed,—the Pope himself! taken captive by Berthier. Pius the Sixth was speedily conveyed to France,—where the Baron Denon, as an accomplished Italian scholar, (and, in the reign of Louis XVI., Chargé d'Affaires at Naples and other Italian States,) was appointed by the First Consul to wait on, and accompany his Holiness, as his Chevalier d'Honneur and Cicerone.

Pope Pius the Sixth died at Valence,—and was succeeded in his captivity in France, by Pope Pius the Seventh. While residing at Venice, the Bishop of Chieramonte had been elected to the Papacy by the Conclave, and carried off by the French to Grenoble; from whence he proceeded to Paris, to take up his residence, a prisoner-guest, at Fontainbleau. Monsieur Denon was again selected to instruct and amuse the illustrious exile; but in either of these honourable positions, to have made any allusion to the Chair of St. Peter, would have been discourteous and *mal à propos.* Denon was, indeed, so delicate on such points, that he refused his great work on Egypt, to Pope Pius the Sixth, because he had proved in it that the world was 6000 years older than the age assigned to it by the Church. Pressed hardly by the Pontiff to explain his refusal, he confessed the truth. The Pope answered, smilingly, "À chaqu'un son metier, à moi, le mien!"

Pope Pius the Sixth was wont to prophesy, that he would be the last Roman Pontiff; and his prediction seemed nearly accomplished, while Buonaparte hesitated in his sagacious policy, (for all conquerors or usurpers are cautious of disturbing popular religions), whether he would not abolish the Papal Power altogether. This hesitation saved it for the time; and the Battle of Waterloo finally prevented the accomplishment of the not "Infallible" Prophet himself. The Allied *Preux* of the nineteenth century assisted to right the boat of the fisherman ("*il navacello del piscatore*"); and the Popes of Rome,

once more ascended the throne of the Vatican, though they never trusted their sacred persons to the ricketty chair of its Basilica, which still remains covered, in its bronze *etui*, as in the time of Alexander the Sixth.

The "return to order," throughout Europe, in 1815, restored the most precious of all the spoils of conquest taken in the Italian wars. Saints returned to their shrines, gods resumed their pedestals, and the glorious testimonies of the genius of man, in all ages, were assigned once more to their old stations in Rome. There may they long remain, in all their original beauty! if not for the original purposes for which they were designed. May they never again be exposed to the ravages of

"Contumelious, beastly, mad-brained war!"

May Rome itself still continue the great STUDIO of high Art—the cabinet of Antiquarian Science,—where modern genius may study from such perfect models as the world may not again produce! May all that is ennobling in the history of the Mistress of the World, her liberties and her patriotism, remain an indelible impression to future generations! And may even those lingering fragments—those dried specimens of a power, no longer available, as in their former omnipotence, to crush the interests of society,—may they too be regarded, *while they last*, with toleration and respect! until, haply, some crystal shrine arise (the triumph of future mechanic art) to preserve the whole mighty relic from the ravages

of time and the elements!—for Rome, so preserved, would be to ages yet unborn the most precious monument which modern science could bequeath to posterity, for its benefit and amusement — its warning and example.

I now hasten to meet another objection,—that the death of Monsieur Denon *leaves* me without the most efficient witness to authenticate the anecdote of "the Chair." The Baron Denon, and most of his learned colleagues, both in and out of the Institute, to whom the circumstances of the Italian wars were familiar, were living when my work on Italy was published. Not one denied the facts which I stated,—though many *opinions*, which time has justified, were severely criticised by such European Reviewers as then wrote in the spirit of the Holy Alliance of those days. The Remarks of Dr. Wiseman in 1833 form the only exception to this assertion. On our return from Italy to Paris, we passed some few weeks there, chiefly to enjoy the society of General Lafayette, and the Baron Denon, with whom my husband and myself continued to correspond, till within a month of his sudden and lamented death.

Some of his admirable letters, dated 1824, appeared, with his permission, in the "Book of the Boudoir," referable to the "Life and Times of Salvator Rosa;" and only two days back, in rummaging a vast coffer containing the correspondences of many years, almost the first letter I lighted on was one signed "Denon." It contains an allusion to his reiterated approbation of my work on Italy;—and if I now

reproduce it here—all flattering as it is—I do so less to gratify my own *amour propre,* than to satisfy any doubts which may linger in public opinion, as to the authenticity even of a trifling anecdote, with which his honoured and immortal name is connected, and which he would have induced me to erase, in future editions, by pointing out the error.

CHERE ET AIMABLE AMIE,

Monsieur Tennant, qui part pour l'Irlande, veut bien se charger de cette lettre, qui au moins vous sera surement remise, et par laquelle vous saurez que nous vous aimons, que nous vous désirons, que nous nous occupons de vous, et en parlons tous les jours. Madame de H——, qui est à la campagne, va être jalouse de mon bonheur de vous avoir entretenu sans elle. Nous vous avons écrit des lettres sous la même enveloppe, mais je suis bien sur qu'elles auront en le sort des vôtres: peut-être quelque jour me les rendra-t-ou en masse et nous en ferons un volume qui nous sera cher, et nous dédommagera de la privation.

Qu'est ce que vous faites, chère amie? Nous n'en savons rien du tout, et nous nous en inquiétons dans vôtre intérêt comme dans la nôtre. Vôtre dernier ouvrage est toujours le plus beau: vôtre "Italie" a une force masculine, qui a conservée toute la grâce de son origine. Je voudrais bien dans ce moment avoir vôtre riche facilité. Toutes les gravures de mon ouvrage sont faites. J'écris mais cela ne m'amuse pas autant; Il est si difficile d'écrire sur l'art, quand il ne faut se livrer qu'à l'imagination des autres, et se garder de celle qu'on aimeroit à avoir. Voilà ou je suis en ce moment: c'est vous cependant qui êtes cause de tout cela! Je voudrais bien en être, à vous en avoir obligation, et n'avoir plus qu'à vous expédier les colossales volumes.

Je désire bien vivement de quelque manière que ce puisse être, vous les remettre en main propre et vous remercier de les avoir fait. Si cela n'est pas encore fini, c'est encore vôtre faute: vous avez envoyé l'Europe dans mon cabinet, et il faut

bien que je sois là, à son secours pour vous justifier, de ce que vous avez dit de lui.

Embrassez nôtre cher, cher Chevalier, mais pour moi tout seul; je ne pardonne la distraction qu'à lui. J'ai vôtre portrait fort bien gravé, que j'ai mis en bonne compagnie; si vous en avez un du Chevalier, vous me ferez un grand plaisir de me l'envoyer.

Je reçois dans ce moment une épreuve d'une notice que je viens de faire pour un ouvrage de nos hommes illustres. Je vous l'envoye pour vous occuper de moi un moment de plus.

Adieu, chère et aimable amie; quand vous trouverez une occasion, écrivez moi deux mots sans le contact de la poste; car ce moyen est de toute nullité entre nous.

Permittez moi de vous embrasser de toute la tendresse de l'amitié la plus vraie, et la mieux sentie.

DENON.

Lady Morgan,
Kildare Street, Dublin.

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